



First Things First commits \$245,000 to Cocopah region

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One group of local children will have better access to early education and health services thanks to a commitment of more than \$245,000 from a statewide organization.

Last week, First Things First (FTF) announced its three-year, \$245,146 financial commitment to the Cocopah Tribe Region.

Representatives with the group dropped off the first check, totaling \$84,189, Wednesday.

"This check represents the ongoing commitment of Arizona's voters to children in the Cocopah region," said FTF Executive Director Rhian Allvin. "These funds will ensure that more local kids arrive at kindergarten prepared to succeed."

According to a news release about the award, FTF funds come from an 80-cent tax increase on tobacco products approved by voters in 2006 for the express purpose of expanding or enhancing education and health services for kids age 5 and younger.

Decisions about which services to fund are made by local volunteers with early childhood expertise, according to the release. The specific amount allocated to each region is determined by the number of children age 5 and under in the area, and how many of those children live in poverty.

"The Cocopah Indian Tribe is a partner with First Things First in promoting school readiness, and we know that the first five years of life are the most important," said Sherry Cordova, chairwoman of the Cocopahs' Tribal Council.

Representatives presented the check Wednesday at the Cocopah Indian Housing and Development Office.

The money will fund early childhood services in the Cocopah area from July 1, 2011, to June 30, 2012.

According to the release, the Cocopah Tribe Regional Partnership Council will continue working with community stakeholders to build on the early childhood services already funded in the region and to address other needs of young children in the area.

For more information about your local regional council and the early childhood services funded by First Things First in the Cocopah Tribe region, visit www.azfff.gov.

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